

# Observing the German Strike, but Refusing to Get Excited

THE great German strikes that came to an end on Monday attracted world-wide attention. Their volume appeared to justify the sensation they created, though many of the reports were manifestly exaggerated. Thus, one dispatch from Copenhagen reported 700,000 workers as striking in greater Berlin, including only 58,000 women, but it is certain that there cannot be so large a number of men now employed in all the industries of greater Berlin.

The strikes apparently began in force about Monday, January 28. Their centre was Berlin, but they also extended to Hamburg, Kiel, Stettin, Danzig, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, and there was even a small strike among Krupp's workmen at Essen. The great industrial region of the Rhine Province and Westphalia, however, can

of siege and restoration of the right of public meeting, suspended by the military authorities.

Fifth—Abolition of militarization of war factories.

Sixth—Immediate release of all political prisoners.

Seventh—Fundamental democratization of state institutions.

Eighth—The institution of equal electoral suffrage by direct or secret ballot.

## An Army Without a General To Direct Its Efforts

A noteworthy feature was that the strike was without leadership. The great trades union organizations, which represent the most trusted cohorts of the Social Democracy, stood aloof; nor did the Socialist leaders identify themselves fully with it. Only after it had gotten well under way did a number of the leaders of the two Socialist parties associate themselves with it and assist in presenting the demands of the strikers to the government. The Prussian Minister of the Interior, indeed, refused to receive a deputation of the strikers, but he conferred with the Socialist members of the Reichstag who acted with them.

One of these members of the Reichstag, Dittmann—one of the men accused last October by Chancellor Michaelis and Marine Secretary Capelle of complicity in the abortive mutiny in the navy—was arrested while addressing strikers, and before the end of last week he had already been tried, evidently by a court martial, and sentenced to five years' confinement in a fortress.

This, indeed, was but one incident in the high-handed procedure by which the military authorities finally squelched the strike. Almost at the very beginning of it soldiers were placed on guard at all munitions plants and about the shipyards of Hamburg and other towns. Martial law was declared in a threatening form. At Berlin the military governor warned the citizens against taking part in public meetings, and that if arms should have to be used to suppress disorders on the streets no distinction would be made between guilty and innocent.

Finally the governor issued a peremptory order to the men to report at their factories for work at 7 a. m. on Monday of this week and showed that he was ready to make the punishment fit the crime of disobedience by adding the following ominous words:

"Employees failing to resume work will be tried by courts martial, which are authorized to impose sentences of death, execution to take place within twenty-four hours of the time the sentence is imposed."

Characteristically enough, the same dispatch which brought the above news also reported on the strike situation, from a semi-official source, as follows:

"The strike everywhere is on the wane. Many factories are working with full crews, and it is assumed the strike will be ended entirely on Monday. This opinion is confirmed by reports from all parts of the country."

This was evidently a true report, for after Monday strike reports from Germany stopped short. The Germans again yielded to their military masters. And they yielded tamely. There had been, indeed, a miniature riot in one quarter of Berlin last week, in which one policeman was killed; but with that achievement the strikers grew ashamed of themselves and resumed their previous accustomed good behavior.

## Accounts of the Disturbance Were Not Taken Without Salt

In turning now to review the reaction of opinions in England and America to the strike it is important to note that comment was nearly everywhere of a cautious temper. A few editors, indeed, adopted jubilant headlines, but the prevalent attitude was one of skeptical watching and waiting. The remark was made in various forms that Germany had made herself so distrustful that no German news could be

## The Persistent Apparition



—From The New York Tribune

taken at its face value. One view was that the extent of the strikes had been purposely exaggerated by the German government in order to lull its enemies into a false security. At London this skeptical attitude was best represented by "The Daily Mail," which argued that if revolution is talked about in Germany it is because the German government wants it to be talked about. It said further that it is virtually true that no strike can happen there in war times unless the government sees



"Strike—for your altars and your fires!"

"Strike—for the green graves of your sires!"

"God and your native land."

—From The Chicago Herald

profit in it. And it regarded the movement as really an appeal to British and French workmen to strike.

"The London Daily News," while rejecting the more extravagant dispatches from Germany, concluded, nevertheless, that some of the spirit that dethroned the Russian Emperor had permeated Germany. It added the following:

"The tide for which President Wilson has so long and so patiently cut the channel is beginning to flow at last. A cleavage between the German people and their rulers stands revealed, but as yet the cleavage is no more than an incipient one."

Comment by the American press presented a wholesome contrast to the extravagant optimism with which the little mutiny in the German navy was hailed in October. The overproud editors of that time are now disposed to believe that the making of revolutions is not a German specialty.

## Incredulity and Suspicion Are At Once Stirred

Distrust of the news dispatches themselves was expressed in a typical way by "The New York Globe" thus:

"The report in which Germany is held is strikingly shown by the reaction in practically all of the Allied countries to the news of internal troubles in Germany. Incredulity and suspicion are generally expressed. The idea prevails that another war manoeuvre may be afoot—that the German government wants to give the impression that division in Germany exists, hoping thereby to create a corresponding division elsewhere."

"The New Haven Register" also thought that Germany must have had some ulterior motive in letting the news go abroad: "There is no doubt that Germany allows the present tidings to come out as propaganda." "The Buffalo Express" halted between the view that it was the beginning of a revolution and that it was mere camouflage, "purposely reported outside Germany for some effect on the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk."

There were conflicting reports about the official view at Washington. According to one report, it was believed that the stories of the strike were sent out for their hoped-for effect upon the Allies; but the Washington correspondent of "The New York Times" reported just the opposite, namely, that when the German censorship permits the full story to reach the outside world "it is the confident belief of official Washington that it will disclose events of the first magnitude in connection with the future of the Central Powers and of the war."

Some of the newspapers, however, found sound reasons for rejecting the camouflage interpretation. "The New York Herald" pointed to the conferences between the government and the Socialist Deputies representing the strikers, and added:

"The fact that these conferences are being held disposes of the theory advanced by some persons in this country that the German strike situation was manufactured by the government for the purpose of influencing public sentiment in this and other countries."

And "The Brooklyn Daily Eagle" interpreted the declaration of martial law as proof that the imperial government was opposed to the strikers.

"The Springfield Republican" also found it "impossible to take seriously the theory

## Heavy, Heavy Hangs Over Thy Head



—From The St. Louis Republic

that the strikes in Germany are only a bit of stage-management, meant to induce the proletariat in enemy countries to revolt."

The New York Tribune did not doubt that the strikes were real, but was very cautious in interpreting their meaning, pointing out that "if the situation is as serious as it looks through the haze it is the beginning of demoralization in Germany. If it is not as serious as it looks, it may be only fantastic." And this paper, discussing the German threat of putting down the strike by force of arms, added: "Every country has its Bolshevik, becoming more and more articulate; and no country will destroy its Bolshevik, not even Germany, for the simple reason that it isn't feasible"—going on to observe that "it is a wise country that understands its own Bolshevik. No people can understand the Bolshevik of another."

The paper also suggested that strikes of still greater dimensions would occur in the United States, England, France and Italy if food conditions were as bad as in Germany, and inclined to the view that "this exploitation of German war weariness is a bit of pacifist propaganda rather than an omen of German disorganization."

"The New York World" discounted the political significance of the strikes upon the score that the United States had more labor troubles last year than Germany. The paper, however, saw a certain political significance in them, declaring:

"It cannot be said that German workmen are striking against war or striking for an immediate peace, but it is plain that they are striking against the government and its policies."

## Was There Any Deep Political Significance?

As to the political significance of the movement, its relation to a revolution or war policy, "The New York Times" advised "rush to no rash conclusions either way, but note the course of events without optimism or pessimism." "The Evening Sun" was distinctly skeptical as to the political aims of the strikers, declaring:

"They show no signs of following Mr. Wilson's suggestion and putting off their heaven-bestowed rulers. It may be doubted whether they entertain any definite idea even of backing the Entente peace proposals."

"The Providence Journal" was decidedly pessimistic:

"The folly of expecting an uprising of the German people against their government is emphasized in the latest accounts of the domestic situation in the empire. The feeble proposal of a general strike hangs fire."

"The Columbus Dispatch" thought the matter looked serious, "but it is never safe to count upon anything happening in Germany that will be of benefit to us in winning the war."

"The Washington Post" made this wise inference:

"The only moral to be drawn by the Allies from the tragic comedy played at Berlin is that they must not relax their efforts to achieve victory by the strength of their arms. Let not the forces of the Allies be lulled into a sense of false security by the hope that the Kaiser's hold upon his subjects is crumbling."

## Linking It Up With the Russian Revolution

Some papers interpreted the strikes as due to the influence of the Russian revolution.

## Man and Master



—From The Memphis Commercial Appeal

"The (N. Y.) Evening Post" wrote: "The Russian germ has plainly found a lodging in the German body politic." "The Philadelphia Public Ledger" expressed in capital letters its view that "The German people have taken note of the Russian revolution." "The Washington Star," "The Cincinnati Times-Star" and "The Brooklyn Daily Eagle" were of the like opinion; but "The St. Louis Republic" strongly dissented, insisting that:

"The German workers desire more democracy, but they certainly do not desire anything like the anarchy under which Russia suffers. Bolshevik precept must be greatly discounted in Germany by Bolshevik example."

Only a few of the editors drew distinctly optimistic conclusions. "The Albuquerque (N. M.) Morning Journal" saw the "beginning of the end," and "The Wisconsin State Journal" "the dawn of peace," while "The St. Louis Post-Dispatch" concluded that "imperial ambition has overleaped all bounds. It is going to wreck on the rock of world domination in a storm of democratic awakening."

# Prince Max, Defending His Fatherland, Deprecates Brutality

THE signs of the times in Germany are growing more and more interesting. For more than a week the American press has been filled with reports of the great German strike, the political background of which was a demand of the working people for a peace at once without annexations. The latest German newspapers bring evidence that changing currents of feeling are also manifesting themselves in the higher walks of German life. If surface indications can be trusted there is already a marked drift away from the mailed fist and the once so cherished "Hymn of Hate."

The war has not achieved the objects aimed at by the military leaders, and the sobering effects of disappointed hopes are finding expression in very high quarters. One of the latest expressions of that character came from Prince Max of Baden, who is a first cousin of the Kaiser himself. Prince Max is president of the Upper Chamber of the Baden legislature, and in opening its winter session about the middle of December he made a speech which has attracted wide attention in the liberal organs of Germany. The prince is one of the most attractive characters in German public life. Readers of Ambassador Gerard's book will probably recall the fine tribute he paid to the prince for his work in behalf of prisoners of war confined in Germany.

Prince Max began his speech in something of the old strain, summarizing the chief events of the war in 1917 and then discussing the publication of the Russian diplomatic archives. He asserted that these "revealed to all the world the secret predatory plans" of Germany's enemies; and of the Russian revolution he said that it was frankly adopting the slogans of the Entente and "was arraigning by its inexorable pacifism those who were trying so shrewdly to combine pacifism as a phrase with a policy of conquest by force of arms."

The speech continues for a time to adopt a tone which, though far milder than the tone of many statesmen's utterances, still would not greatly rasp on the ears of the war lords. Thus:

"In France the popular will supported Jean Jaurès in July, 1914, when he demanded that France exert her whole influence for peace. Jean Jaurès was murdered under circumstances from the war butters. The French government, seeing signs of a popular uprising, overcame it by publishing Germany's proclamation of a state of 'war danger,' without making public Russia's order for a general mobilization. English authorities reported that in this way Germany's act of self-defense against Russia appeared as an act of aggression against France. Then the French people naturally turned away from the enemy at home in order to protect their threatened country. The people's will to go to war was thus created. It was falsified. The English people, in the decisive hours, were just as helpless against their govern-

ment. They took no account of the fact that Grey had in his hands an infallible means for preserving the world's peace. He only needed to add to the warning he sent to Russia on July 25—not to break up the diplomatic negotiations by ordering a general mobilization, the words which Bethmann-Hollweg sent to the Austrian government on July 30. 'We refuse to permit ourselves to be drawn into a world conflagration through disregard of our advice on the part of our ally,' and he would have saved the peace of the world. It is only with difficulty that the French and English governments are able to-day to maintain before the peoples the pose of innocence suddenly and violently attacked."

## Paying His Unflattering Respects To President Wilson

"And now President Wilson, after three years of war, gathers together all the outworn slogans of the Entente of 1914 and proclaims against Germany as the disturber of the peace a crusade for humanity, liberty and the rights of small nations. Those are mighty words, and we should make no mistake; they appeal to the idealism of millions. But I put the question: 'Has the President of the United States the right to come forward as judge of the earth?' President Wilson has no right to fight in the name of humanity. For when a large part of America's peace industries were transformed into workshops of death at a time when America and Germany were still at peace he tolerated it. He carefully maintained this formal right of America to supply our foes with munitions, whereas he abandoned without a struggle America's human-

**"IN REJECTING all claims of our enemies to assume the role of judge, let us not be uncritical toward ourselves. . . . On all sides people are growing tired of the 'moratorium of the Sermon on the Mount.' . . . It is necessary that even during the war we turn from this brutalizing influence of war."**

right to have our non-combatants, particularly our weak and sick, cared for. Moreover, President Wilson, after having undertaken the protection of our prisoners of war in Russia, permitted them to be treated negligently, heartlessly. Under the old régime in Russia our prisoners died by thousands, and that without America making any use of its powerful means of pressure to compel better treatment. In France, too, America was tolerant when the cruelty of the people was visiting upon our countrymen every imaginable torture and disgrace."

"President Wilson has no right to speak in the name of democracy and liberty, for he was the mighty ally of Russian Czarism, but he had deaf ears when the Russian democracy appealed to him to allow it to discuss peace conditions, or at least to order no offensive, in order that it might consolidate its liberties."

"It is a tragical fact of this world war that, for the great masses of the American people, Europe is—historically, psychologically and politically—an undiscovered continent. Every attempt at spreading information is suppressed; every movement toward freedom of thought is tyrannically

crushed. Lord Northcliffe has just told how the American government has a spy system which is said to operate still more efficiently than the Russian Ochrana."

## It Doesn't Pay Not to Criticise One's Self

Then he assumes a grave mien, addressing his fellow countrymen:

"In rejecting, however, all claims of our enemies to assume the rôle of judge let us not be uncritical toward ourselves. We know very well that there was a German servitude (Unfreiheit), but it lay not in the institutions of the German Empire, but in a certain intellectual attitude of large classes of the German people. Our enemies speak of authorities who force their will upon an unwilling people, and they arrogate to themselves the downright grotesque rôle of liberating the German people from those tyrants. We can only laugh at that. The trouble lay much rather in the great willingness of many Germans to adopt an indolent attitude toward the authorities without assuming any responsibility of their own for the welfare of the Fatherland."

"But the war came as a great awakener. On all sides the hidden powers of our people have been stirred, and the lost opportunities of our history have been resurrected. Out at the front our people have learned how many and what varied forces flow together to constitute our strength. Our people in arms will some day come home with steely hearts, with steely right."

"From the great will to unity that has come into existence at the battlefield we may venture to expect the best fruitage for Germany's future. The spirit of our political reformers, the spirit of Stein and Hardenberg, emerges to-day out of Germany's past, with warning, and yet with promise. Whether that promise shall be fulfilled depends solely upon the character of our people. Institutions alone cannot guarantee the freedom of a people. There is only one valid guarantee, the character of the people themselves. But there can be no doubt of this: The longer the war lasts all the harder will be the work of reconstruction. Not only with us, but also in enemy countries. On their side, too, it is precisely the best men that are falling. Who would rejoice at that? Things may come

to such a point that Europe will no longer possess the curative force that is necessary to make her wounds close."

"Judging from present appearances the war must be fought through to the complete exhaustion of Europe. Such is America's will, and also the will of the French and English governments. They boldly reject those general goals of humanity because they see in them the pillars upon which might be erected the great bridge between the peoples."

"These are manifestations which leave no room for mistake. But we must not let ourselves be deceived by Clemenceau and Lloyd George. That unity behind their fronts of which they speak does not exist. In France as well as in England there are forces at work which do not want a peace by force, but only a peace compatible with the honor and security of their country. The enemy ministers have been the first to reveal to us how strong those forces are. Otherwise, why does Clemenceau threaten to court-martial all those who support a peace by understanding; and why does Lloyd George introduce censorship terrorism into the House of Parliament itself? There is growing up in enemy countries a sentiment that the war baiters are afraid of. Those who cherish it may possibly come into power, but we dare not indulge any illusions; to-day they are still without power and may long remain so."

"Out of this state of affairs a double duty arises, for we must gather together all our national strength for the hard fight that is still before us, and at the same time we must strive to make it clear with what sentiments we are determined, in contrast to hostile governments, to take up the new

ordering of affairs. If we want to create that clarity we must not fear the strike of opinion in Germany. A party true would be false and illusory which should seek, even in war times, to tone down and cover up the unavoidable differences between opposed philosophies of life."

"The right kind of party true demands that men shall not set themselves up to judge others in a malevolent and provocative spirit. We know that, with good will, such a truce can be adhered to. A high-water mark of German history was unquestionably touched when on August 1, 1914, our Kaiser uttered the liberating word: 'I know no parties, I know only Germans'."

## The Moratorium of the Sermon On the Mount

And then he comes to the theme of hatred:

"A fearful responsibility rests to-day upon those who guide the destinies of the peoples. That responsibility must also be borne by all those who at home, with watchful eyes and burning hearts, are doing their part in this war. On all sides healing powers are listening for each other on all sides people are growing tired of the 'moratorium of the Sermon on the Mount.' Humanity longs to hear its abolition announced even before the war comes to an end. The Christian man, Sir William Byles, just deceased, who uttered those awful words about the 'moratorium of the Sermon on the Mount,' was thinking not of the unavoidable horrors that occur on the battlefield, but of the hearts of men and asking that many men of intellectual eminence in all countries have adopted almost with pride during this war."

"It is necessary that even during the war we turn from this brutalizing influence of war. Here, too, the best spirit of the army can guide us. For a Christian soldier the spirit of the Red Cross is just as necessary for an army as its offensive spirit. In his mind the soldier who does not exert all his energy to destroy the fighting enemy neglects his duty just as much as the soldier who gives no quarter to the disarmed foe. In a similar spirit reports come from England according to which the English clergy have learned from the fighting troops respect for their enemies, a respect that will not tolerate the dictatorship of the venomous press."

"In the appeal of the Information and Aid Bureau for Germans abroad and foreigners in Germany occurs a sentence which I will quote here: 'The love of one's enemies, even in war, is the sign of those who are true to the Lord.' I should like to supplement that sentence thus: It is also the sign of those who are true to Germany. It has been asserted that hatred is necessary in order to continue the war with energy, but the answer to that was given by a German prince: 'Love for our Fatherland is sufficient to make us give our best.'"

"Power alone cannot assure us the position in the world which we think ourselves entitled to. The sword cannot cut down the moral opposition that has raised itself against us. If the world is to become reconciled to the magnitude of our power, it must feel that behind it is a world conscience. I intend that sentiment. In order to meet that requirement we have only to open up the portals of our inmost hearts, for the feeling of responsibility to humanity illumines the whole range of Germany's intellectual history. Germany can confidently write that sign upon its banners. In that sign we shall conquer."

# The Allied Council Pledges "War to a Clean Peace"

THE complete significance of the meeting and decision of the Supreme War Council of the Allies, which has just adjourned at Paris, is yet to appear. Judging from first press reactions, however, this little-hailed conference and its decision will rank in importance with other famous Paris conferences, among which might be mentioned that at which Lloyd George made his explosive speech and the more recent consultation which Colonel House attended.

The session, which was comparatively brief, was attended by Clemenceau and Pichon for France, Lloyd George and Lord Milner for England, Orlando and Sonnino for Italy, and military representatives including Generals Weygand, Wilson, Cadorna, Bliss, Foch, Robertson, Alferi, Pétain, Haig and Pershing.

The chief business of the council was its answer to the German and Austrian peace replies. The answer was a stern one:

"The council was unable to find in von Hertling's and Cernin's recent utterances any real approximation to the moderate conditions laid down by the Allies' governments. Under the circumstances the council decided that the only task before them to meet was the vigorous and effective prosecution of the

war until the pressure of that effort produced a change of temper in the enemy governments, justifying the hope of the conclusion of a peace based on the principles of freedom, justice and respect for international law. The council arrived at a complete unanimity of policy on measures for the prosecution of the war."

Aside from this significant notice of Allied determination to fight on, one should add the fact that America was not represented at the conference in a political way save by a Paris embassy representative as reporter. However, it was rumored that a Cabinet member from Washington might soon go to France for future conferences similar to that just closed, and it was further unofficially stated at Washington that the declaration of the council regarding the Teutonic peace utterances did not commit the American government in any way.

That the statement of the council will cause trouble is the hint from England. Writing to The New York Tribune, Arthur S. Draper, London correspondent, says that already "British pacifists and some moderates are preparing a campaign which they hope will result in the overthrow of the Lloyd George government and the elevation of Lord Lansdowne to

the Premiership, with a Cabinet composed of Liberals and Laborites." Until Lloyd George speaks on the results of the conference, this informant continues, British labor can only consider the Versailles decision "as a repudiation of their policy regarding war aims," while it will be viewed by many others as "a serious blow to the plan for a league of nations and a setback to the President's policy."

Perhaps the best general statement of those in England opposed to the new decision is that to be found in the following editorial from "The London Daily News," particularly with regard to Alsace-Lorraine and a French generalissimo:

"The misgivings which the report of the Versailles conference raised in the minds of many sober critics have not been diminished on more mature reflection. The salient fact to-day is that the government whose nominees represented this country at Versailles has shown itself to be widely and increasingly out of touch with the trend and spirit of the country. That creates a disquieting situation and lays the foundation for serious misunderstandings."

"There is the further question of a single generalissimo on the Western front. It is significant that on the morrow of the Versailles discussions the French press became suddenly eloquent on the military qualities of General Foch, as a section of the British

press was at a critical moment on General Nivelle. To recall the parallel should be sufficient."

Comment in the American press at this writing leans heavily toward hearty support of the conclusions of the council. Even "The Philadelphia Public Ledger," which sees in the council's reply a great tribute to the efforts of the Bolsheviks at Brest-Litovsk, approves the decision:

"Allied statesmanship has won another signal victory. The supreme war council at Versailles has again disappointed the Bismarck-taught diplomacy of Berlin by taking a stand which will rally behind it not only every Allied nation but every sane section of opinion in every Allied nation."

"It is the one and only thing to do, of course," agrees "The Philadelphia Inquirer." "No other rejoinder was possible," is the view of "The Boston Transcript," while The New York Tribune, impatient with statements of "war aims," exclaims:

"It seems futile to bring words unto words. The statement means what it says or nothing. There is but one task, and that is to defeat Germany. Through victory lies the way to what Lansdowne calls 'a clean peace.' It is a perfect locution. Why bother with definitions? The world wants a clean peace."

Similar views are expressed by "The

New York Evening Sun," "The New York Evening Telegram," "The Providence Journal," "The Wilmington News," "The Wilkes-Barre Record" and "The New York Times," which raps "The London Daily News" for its attitude.

In "The Philadelphia Public Ledger" the Allied statement is criticised as a "rebuttal to Wilson" by Isaac Don Levine:

"The declaration of the Allied Supreme War Council at Versailles is perhaps the culminating point of the disastrous diplomacy of the Western European democracies. It is not only a blow at the stirrings of democracy in Austria and Germany at a moment when the people of those countries needed encouragement and stimulus urgently, but it also nullifies to a great extent the stiffening effect that the revolutionary strikes in the Central Powers have had on the Russian Bolsheviks and creates the possibility of the complete Russian submission to the Pan-German peace terms."

"The joint Allied statement also further increases the chasm between Russia and the Allies, being at the same time an indirect rebuke to President Wilson and an attempt to wrest the leadership of Allied policy from his hands."

German reactions to the Paris statement are to the effect that again the Allies have demonstrated their intention to crush Germany.